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ABSTRACT

Based on information found in statistical compilations and other publications, the status of women in librarianship was examined in three groups of countries: western-style democracies including the United States, Canada, France, and New Zealand; Soviet bloc countries including Bulgaria, Cuba, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Hungary and Czechoslovakia; and developing nations including Nigeria, India, and Brazil. In all three groups of nations, librarianship was found to be a women's profession, i.e., a profession in which an atypically high percentage of employed professionals and degree recipients are women. The only exception to this was found in Nigeria. In all the countries examined, a pattern of intraoccupational segregation was also found, i.e., librarianship exhibited different career tracks for men and women. Differences were found in the kinds of academic degrees conferred, the prestige of occupational subfields entered, the job levels attained within these subfields, and the salaries earned at each job level. Men were consistently found to have achieved higher status in librarianship than women. This publication presents the results of the cross-national examination of librarianship, with tables showing statistical differences in status and career track for male and female librarians and quotations from reports on librarianship in various countries. A 45-item bibliography is included. (Author/ESR)

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Women in Librarianship:

A Cross-National Problem Study

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I. Introduction

In the United States, librarianship is offhandedly referred to as a "woman's profession". What specifically is meant by this: that there is a greater percentage of women in this occupation than in most others and that more women than men are earning library science degrees? Or that women enjoy fuller equality with men in librarianship than in other professions in terms of kinds of academic degrees conferred, prestige of occupational subfields entered into, job levels attained within these subfields, and salaries earned at each job level? This paper attempts to answer these questions about the status of women in librarianship in the United States and several other western-style democracies. Second, an examination is made of the status of female librarians in several Soviet bloc countries. Third, this paper looks at women librarians in three developing nations.

II. Western-style democracies

A. United States

If the definition of a "woman's profession" is simply an occupational field in which an atypically high percentage of workers and degree recipients are female, then librarianship is clearly a woman's profession in the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in January, 1983, that in 1982, 83.4% of employed librarians were female.[1] Also, in 1980, a total of 5,374 master's degrees in library science were conferred; of these, 4,370 were granted to women.[2] Indeed, in only three other professions (nursing, home economics, elementary, secondary, and special

education) are the percentages of employed females and female degree recipients higher than in librarianship.[3]

"Among the public at large, and among librarians, women's predominance has been taken to mean women's equality."[4] However, when one moves beyond simple percentages of employees and degree recipients into an examination of kinds of academic degrees conferred, occupational subfields, job levels within the subfields, and salaries at each job level, one finds that female librarians do not share full equality with their male counterparts. A pattern of "the higher, the fewer" permeates the four criteria. Table 1 looks more specifically at library science degree recipients. Clearly the higher up the academic credential ladder one travels, the fewer women one encounters.

Looking next at job types or subfields, one finds women librarians working in the greatest numbers at the jobs with the least prestige.

> ...women librarians are more likely to work in school libraries than in libraries of other types, and least so in academic libraries.... However, if work in each type of library is ranked by the level of esteem it is accorded, the ranking is precisely in reverse. In that case, academic libraries are at the top and school libraries at the bottom.[5]

In addition to academic librarianship, two other prestigious subfields are archival librarianship, where, in 1979, 54% of employed archivists were male, and the teaching of library science in ALA-accredited programs, where, in the 1979-1980 academic year, 58.8% of all faculty were male.[6]

Table 1: Percentages of Male and Female Recipients of Degrees and Certificates Awarded by U.S. Library Education Programs, 1976-1979

	Male	Female
A.A.	9.8	90.2
B.A.	7.2	92.8
Nonaccredited M.L.S.	18.0	82.0
ALA-accredited M.L.S.	20.0	80.0
Sixth Year Certificate	23.1	76.8
Doctorate	49.4	50.6

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "Women in Librarianship," The ALA Yearbook, 1981, Vol. 6 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1981), p. 302.

Not only are women underrepresented in the more prestigious library subfields (and overrepresented in the less esteemed subfields), but within each subfield, women are found in largest percentages at the lower job levels and in smallest percentages at the higher job levels. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 examine the percentages of males and females at each job level within four library subfields: the teaching of library science, librarianship at the Library of Congress, librarianship in state libraries and agencies, and public librarianship.

Because women tend to work in the less prestigious library subfields, and at the lower job levels within each subfield, it is not surprising that, correspondingly, the median salary of female librarians as a whole is lower than that of male librarians. It is significant, however, that even at the same job level in the same occupational subfield, women librarians have lower salaries than male librarians. For example, a 1979 survey of the members of the Society of American Archivists revealed that "...there are salary differences in favor of men, regardless of experience or type of position in most cases."[7] Tables 6, 7, and 8 look at median or average salaries of male and female librarians in three other subfields: academic librarianship, the teaching of library science, and public librarianship. Note that the higher the job level, the greater the disparity between male and female salaries.

In short, when one studies the status of women in librarianship in the United States in terms of four criteria: kinds of academic

Table 2: Percentages of Male and Female Library Science Faculty (ALA-accredited Programs), 1979-1980 Academic Year

	Male	Female
Lecturers	29.2	70.8
Instructors	20.0	80.0
Assistant Professors	48.6	51.4
Associate Professors	61.3	38.7
Professors	67.4	32.6
Deans, Directors	79.1	20.9

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 37.

Table 3: Percentages of Male and Female Library of Congress Workforce Members, 1980

	Male	Female
Total Staff	47	53
Grades 16-18	86	14

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 36-37.

Table 4: Percentages of Male and Female Professional Staff Members, State Libraries and Agencies, 1977

	Male	Female
Total Professional Staff	33.33	66.67

Percentage of Males Holding Administrative Posts: 21.4

Percentage of Females Holding Administrative Posts: 12.9

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 36.

Table 5: Percentages of Male and Female Public Library Workforce, 1981

	Male	Female
Beginning Professional	19.8	80.2
Branch and Department Heads	21.3	78.7
Directors	46.9	53.1
Directors of Large Libraries	66	34

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 32-33.

Table 6: Median Salaries of Academic Librarians, 1980

	Male	Female
Beginning Professionals	$13,221	$13,423
Branch and Department Heads	$20,396	$18,307
Directors	$32,999	$24,999

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 27.

Table 7: Average Salaries of Library Science Faculty (ALA-accredited Programs), 1979-1980 Academic Year

	Male	Female
Lecturer	$23,237	$20,710
Instructor	$15,500	$15,644
Assistant Professor	$19,033	$19,071
Associate Professor	$22,991	$22,975
Professor	$30,215	$27,194

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 38.

Table 8: Median Salaries of Male and Female Public Library Workforce, 1981

	Male	Female
Beginning Professional	$13,316	$13,271
Branch and Department Heads	$19,495	$17,139
Directors	$30,241	$19,908

Source: Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 32.

degrees conferred, representation in occupational subfields, job level representation within the subfields, and median or average salaries at each job level within the subfields, "A dual career pattern for male and female librarians emerges as a central fact...."[8] "The term 'intraoccupational segregation' characterizes a single occupation which exhibits different career tracks for men and women. In librarianship, the pattern is clear...."[9]

B. Canada

Are the percentages of female employed professionals and degree recipients in librarianship as large in other western-style democracies as they are in the United States? Is a pattern of intraoccupational segregation as clear in these countries as it is in the United States?

In Canada, a sex and salary survey taken in 1971 of large public libraries found that "...there is ...evidence that females are less likely than males to direct libraries, that they are paid less when they do, and that they are even less likely to manage large systems than small ones."[10]

> The differences between men and women directors persisted in the several factors we analyzed. ... The median salary for male directors is 30 percent higher than for women. The mean per capita expenditure for libraries under male directors is 30 percent higher than for women. Beginning professional salaries for positions in libraries under male directors are 6.5 percent ^ higher than for those under female directors.[11]

"...the data indicate that we still have a long way to go in attaining a reasonable approximation of 'equal pay for equal work'."[12]

A second study of salary differentials of female and male librarians was undertaken in 1975 and 1976, resulting in similar findings. "As a result of an extensive study of the career paths of librarians ...the Canadian female-male salary differential was confirmed."[13] Table 9 demonstrates that there is a salary differential in favor of male librarians, a differential which is greatest at the highest levels and least at the lowest levels.

The same study identified several reasons employers use to pay female librarians less than their male counterparts: lower educational qualifications, more interrupted careers, and lower motivation and aspirations. As for the first reason, lower educational qualifications, the study found that "Men ...have ... slightly higher educational qualifications than women. This does not explain the higher salary ..., since men earned a higher salary in every educational category."[14] Table 10 gives mean salaries at each educational level for men and women.

As for the second reason, more interrupted careers, the researchers found that 52.6% of female librarians are unmarried, and only 37.8% of female librarians are mothers, so the interrupted career fear seems somewhat overstated. More significantly, they "...found that the percentage of female librarians who plan to have interrupted careers is lower than the percentage of men who plan to leave the professional altogether."[15]

As for the third reason, lower motivation and aspirations, the researchers attempted to compare motivational and aspirational levels between male and female librarians, by examining efforts made in

Table 9: Mean Salaries of Male and Female Librarians, Canada, 1975-1976

	Male	Female	Difference
Librarian I, II, and no level	$13,389	$13,001	$388
Acting Heads, Acting Department and Branch Heads	$18,588	$17,079	$1,509
Chiefs, Directors, or Acting Chiefs	$20,896	$16,342	$4,554

Source: Sherrill Cheda et al, "Salary Differentials of Female and Male Librarians in Canada," Emergency Librarian, Vol. 5, No. 3 (January/February, 1978), p. 6.

Table 10: Mean Salaries of Male and Female Librarians in Each Educational Level, Canada, 1975-1976

	Male	Female
B.L.S.	$16,527	$14,691
B.L.S. and M.A.	$25,711	$16,805
M.L.S.	$14,870	$13,883
M.L.S. and M.A.	$15,390	$12,920

Source: Sherrill Cheda et al, "Salary Differentials of Female and Male Librarians in Canada," Emergency Librarian, Vol. 5, No. 3 (January/February, 1978), p. 8.

job seeking (specifically, the number of applications sent out) and willingness to relocate for a job. They found no significant differences between the two sexes in these regards. They concluded:

> At this point, from our data, we conclude that if a woman does all of the "right" things, i.e. becomes chief librarian, ... adds an M.A. to her library degree, ...and takes no breaks in her career, she will be most heavily penalized for her gender.[16]

C. France

In France, 90% of library certificate recipients each year, on average, are women.[17] However,

> From the career point of view, promotion opportunities have never been the same for men and women ...and it is fair to say that the greater the level of responsibility, the less likelihood there is of its falling to a woman. At the present time (1975) among librarians and assistant librarians, a man is twice as likely to reach the highest level in his career as a woman. ... In French libraries, ...the percentage of women in any category is always greater in the lower grades than in the top grades.[18]

D. New Zealand

In examining briefly the status of female librarians in a fourth democratic country, New Zealand, one finds similarities to the United States, Canada, and France immediately. 82% of employed professional librarians and 95% of library certificate holders in New Zealand are women. Yet

> The largest public libraries in New Zealand are run by men; there is only one female University librarian out of six; (and) there are no women lecturers at the School of Librarianship, Victoria University of Wellington.[19]

Table 11 reveals the now familiar pattern of

"the higher, the fewer" for women librarians, in this case female academic librarians in New Zealand.

III. Soviet bloc countries

Is librarianship a woman's profession in Soviet bloc countries? Are the highest percentages of employed professional librarians and library degree recipients female in these countries? What is the status of women working in libraries in Soviet bloc countries? Do they suffer from the dual career pattern of men and women (called intraoccupational segregation) as do their counterparts in western-style democracies?

Information about women is available as to the percentages working in libraries and receiving library degrees in Soviet bloc countries. Information is not as readily available as to the kinds of academic degrees conferred upon women, the prestige of the subfields they tend to enter into, the job levels they attain within these subfields, or the salaries they earn at each job level within each subfield.

A. Bulgaria, Cuba

Interestingly, in at least two bloc countries, librarianship shifted from a male to a female preserve with revolution. Until the Communist Revolution of 1944 in Bulgaria, there were virtually no female librarians. Now "...95% of the entire librarian cadres consist of females."[20] Similarly, in Cuba, in the early 1970's, the government declared "...over thirty occupations, including librarianship, 'women's work' because of the need for more men for hard physical labor in the sugar cane fields."[21]

Table 11: Percentages of Male and Female Professional Staff Members, University Libraries, New Zealand, 1980

	Male	Female
Assistant Librarians	31.19	68.81
Associate Librarians, Heads of Departments	47.7	52.3
Deputies	71.4	28.6
Librarians	83.3	16.7

Source: W. D. McEldowney, "Qualified Staff in New Zealand Libraries, 1951-1980," New Zealand Libraries, Vol. 43, No. 10 (June, 1982), p. 156.

B. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Librarianship is a woman's profession in the Soviet Union, in that 95% of librarians, according to 1970 census data, are women. The only professions with higher percentages of employed females are nursing, typing and stenography, and nursery school personnel - a situation very similar to that in the United States. Unlike the United States, in the Soviet Union 75% of doctors and dentists are also female; however, being a doctor is a far less esteemed career there than it is here. A study in the 1970's found that while being a doctor is the number one occupational aspiration of girls in the Soviet Union, it is only number ten for boys.[22] The more feminized a profession (i.e. percentage of women employees in it), the lower its prestige.

Prestige of occupation and salary level are usually correlated, and, in a Report of the Visit of the Delegation of United States Librarians to the Soviet Union, May - June, 1961, under the U.S. - Soviet Cultural Exchange Agreement, it is reported that librarians shared a "below-level" wage category with preschool teachers, and semi-professional medical personnel. Senior librarians were in a "above average" wage category with secondary school directors, editors and translators, junior research workers, and chief physicians and directors of medical establishments. Library directors were in the "high salary" category with university professors and associate professors, senior research workers, and directors and deputy directors of higher educational and research establishments. Librarians do not appear in the "very high" and "extremely high" wage categories.[23]

C. Hungary

While only 40% of all Hungarian workers are female, 70% of library and documentation staff are women. "Of all the intellectual occupations, teaching alone employs a greater percentage of women than libraries."[24] More than twice as many women as men get specialized library science training, but, following a pattern now familiar to the reader, only 53% of women library employees get advanced training, while 90% of the men do.

> ...a woman employed in a library to perform the same duties as a man cannot be paid less than he is (by law). However, since the level of renumeration is basically determined by academic attainments and diplomas, women ...are necessarily handicapped.[25]

D. Czechoslovakia

A 1975 survey in Czechoslovakia found "...that there is an overwhelming majority of female librarians."[26] There is only one male employee in each of 16.7% of district and regional libraries. In each of these libraries, that one male is the director. Male directors are paid an average of 200 crowns more per month than are female directors.[27]

IV. Developing nations

For the third group of countries to be examined, that of developing nations, still less information is available about the status of women in librarianship than is available for Soviet bloc countries. Like the situation with Soviet bloc nations, information is not available about women and the kinds of library science degrees they earn, the subfields they enter into, the job levels

they attain, and the salaries they earn. Unlike for the Soviet bloc countries, even the more rudimentary statistics as to the percentages of female employees in libraries and of female library science degree recipients are often not accessible and in many cases may simply not exist. Nevertheless, the information which is available appears to verify, in developing nations, the pattern of intraoccupational segregation found in librarianship in western-style democracies and Soviet bloc countries. Interestingly, however, in one of the three developing nations examined, librarianship is not a woman's profession.

A. Nigeria

In 1976, Nigeria had 500 professional librarians, only one-third of whom were women. This 2:1 ratio (men to women) of employed professional librarians correlates with the ratios of students in library science programs in Nigeria, as Table 12 demonstrates.

The head of the Department of Library Studies at Ibadan University reports that for librarians, while there is equal pay for men and women at each job level, "...there is a higher rate of acceleration for men."[28] More generally, while it is now the norm in Nigeria for women to know a trade and to work, "There is discrimination against women when it comes to the top posts in the society."[29]

B. India

India currently has approximately 30,000 qualified librarians.[30] P. S. G. Kumar, an Indian, writing in 1975, stated:

Table 12: Number of Male and Female Students Enrolled in Library Studies, Ibadan University, Nigeria, 1975 Session

	Male	Female
Year 1, Diploma Course	16	10
Year 2, Diploma Course	32	21
Post Graduate	26	9
Higher Degrees	5	2

Source: F. A. Ogunsheye, "Libraries, Librarians and Library Administration: In Nigeria," Women in Library Administration (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1976), p. 23.

> Women are suitable for librarianship because of their patience, sympathy and perseverence. In India, as elsewhere, they outnumber men in the profession, but drop out because of marriage and household duties; hence their contribution to the profession is negligible.[31]

The Bowker Annual, 1981 reports that there are now 42 library schools in India offering one year B.L.S. degrees, 10 offering M.L.S. programs, and 9 Ph.D. programs. While it is not stated, this writer assumes these programs are either co-educational or for male students only. Diploma programs, however, are conducted at 12 women's polytechnical institutes.[32] Thus women especially are trained for the lower level, paraprofessional jobs in libraries.

C. Brazil

Although 95% of all Brazilian librarians are women, a 1975 monograph "...differentiates between the commonly used title, bibliotecarious (male librarian), and the seldom used bibliotecaria (female librarian) as indicative of the domination of the patriarchal society."33 Salaries for librarians are low, as a "...function of the fact that most librarians are women and most women are kept by a husband or a father; because wages are low, librarianship remains a female occupation."[34]

V. Conclusion

The status of women in librarianship was examined in three groups: western-style democracies, Soviet bloc countries, and developing nations. In all three groups, i.e. cross-nationally,

librarianship was found to be a woman's profession, the definition of which being a profession in which an atypically high percentage of employed professionals and degree recipients are women. The only exception to this was found in Nigeria, the least developed of the three developing nations explored. With no exceptions, cross-nationally, a pattern of intraoccupational segregation was found, the definition of which being an occupation exhibiting different career tracks for men and women. In librarianship, different career tracks can be found cross-nationally, in terms of kinds of academic degrees conferred, prestige of occupational subfields entered into, job levels attained within these subfields, and salaries earned at each job level.

Footnotes

[1]U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "1982 Annual Averages: Revised Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Series," Employment and Earnings (January, 1983), p. 158.

[2]U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Earned Degrees Conferred, by Field of Study, 1975 to 1980, and the Level of Degree and Sex, 1980," Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981, 102nd ed., p. 166.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Anita R. Schiller, "Sex and Library Careers," Women in Librarianship: Melvil's Rib Symposium, ed. Margaret Myers and Mayra Scarborough (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Bureau of Library and Information Science Research, Rutgers Univ. Graduate School of Library Service, 1975), p. 12.

[5]Ibid., p. 15.

[6]Kathleen M. Heim, "The Demographic and Economic Status of Librarians in the 1970's, with Special Reference to Women," Advances in Librarianship, Vol. 12 (New York: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 7 and 37.

[7]Ibid., p. 7.

[8]Ibid., p. 2.

[9]Ibid.

[10]R. L. Carpenter and K. D. Shearer, "Sex and Salary Survey: Selected Statistics of Large Public Libraries in the United States and Canada," Library Journal, 97 (November 15, 1972), p. 3682.

[11]Ibid., p. 3685.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Sherill Cheda et al., "Salary Differentials of Female and Male Librarians in Canada," Emergency Librarian, Vol. 5, No. 3 (January/February, 1978), p. 3.

[14]Ibid., p. 12.

[15]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[16]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[17]Geneviève Boisard, "Do Women Hold the Reins of Power in French Libraries?" UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries, 29 (November/December, 1975), p. 303.

[18]Ibid., pp. 312 and 309.

[19]Julia Millen, "The War of the Words," Broadsheet (May, 1981), p. 25.

[20]Elena V. Savova, "The Role of Women in the Field of Librarianship in the People's Republic of Bulgaria," Women in Library Administration (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 29.

[21]R. Alexander, "De-Manning in Cuba," Librarians for Social Change, 5, p. 8.

[22]Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change (Berkeley, California: Univ. of California Press, 1978), pp. 173 and 198.

[23]Melville J. Ruggles and Raynard C. Swank, Soviet Libraries and Librarianship: Report of the Visit of the Delegation of United States Librarians to the Soviet Union, May - June, 1961, under the U.S. - Soviet Cultural Exchange Agreement (Chicago: American Library Assoc., 1962), pp. 109-110.

[24]Jobóru Magda, "Women Librarians and Documentalists in Hungary," UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries, 29 (November/December, 1975), p. 315.

[25]Ibid., p. 317.

[26]Z. Brossanzová and H. Križanová, "Knihovnici a Knihovničky" ("Male and Female Librarians"), Citatel', 24 (1975), pp. 56-58.

[27]Ibid.

[28]F. A. Ogunsheye, "Libraries, Librarians and Library Administration: In Nigeria," Women in Library Administration (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1976), pp. 22-23.

[29]Ibid., p. 27.

[30]D. R. Kalia, "Library Services in India," The Bowker Annual, 1981, 26th ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1981), p. 381.

[31]P. S. G. Kumar, "Women and Librarianship: Significance of 1975," Herald of Library Science, 14 (October, 1975), pp. 221-224.

[32]Kalia.

[33]C. McCarthy, Developing Libraries in Brazil, with a Chapter on Paraguay (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1975), p. 45.

[34]Ibid., p. 181.

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